BLISTER RUST NEWS SERVICE

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Delay in removal of currants and gooseberries, the host plants of the blister rust, may mean irreparable loss to the white pine wood lot. In one pine lot in New Hampshire 41 per cent of the pines were infected in one year.

White pine, which ranked first in lumber production from 1620 up to about 1895, is now in fifth place. Second growth pine in the Northeast is assisting this species in retaining its high rank. With proper protection from the blister rust this fine tree will always be a considerable factor in timber production within its natural range.

There are eight different white pines native to this country. All of them have their needles in bundles of 5. They include the eastern white pine, western white pine, sugar pine, limber pine, white-bark pine, Mexican white pine, fox-tail and bristle-cone pine. Two other white pines have been introduced from Europe in recent years and are quite common in parks and cemeteries. They are the Himalayan white pine and the stone or cembrian pine. All of these are more or less susceptible to the white pine blister rust.

Pine Protection Pays.

An acre of thrifty growing white pines on average sites in southern New England produces from 500 to 1000 board feet per year between the ages of 25 and 65 years. This takes place only in fully stocked stands. Where pine is mixed with birch or aspen or other hardwood trees, the annual yield per acre is materially lessened.

The average cost of protection of this pine from the blister rust last year was 18 cents per acre. Should the cost of protection mount up to $2.00 per acre it would be money well spent, since white pine is increasing in value from $5.00 to $10.00 per acre each year.

Science Aids Pine Owner.

Both gooseberries and currants are responsible for spreading the dangerous forest pest called the white pine blister rust. While this may seem unlikely and even impossible to the average observer, it has been scientifically proved by cross inoculation in laboratories in America as well as in Europe. Thus, spores from a rust spot on the pine can infect a gooseberry or currant leaf, and spores from a diseased spot on a currant or gooseberry can infect a white pine tree. The blister rust does not pass directly from pine to pine.

Scientific study has also demonstrated that the spores which can infect pine trees are very short lived. Destruction of currant and gooseberry bushes near the white pines will therefore prevent infection being carried to these trees.

Mud Time Approaches.

This time of the year has been characterized as the dawn of the season of cultivation. Just after the frost is leaving the ground, and while the soil is so saturated with moisture that plowing is impractical - that is mud time.

At this time of the year the wild gooseberry and currant bushes are pushing forth their new leaves. These plants are usually the first to leaf out, and are therefore readily recognizable among undergrowth even at a distance.

In white pine-growing regions "Mud Time" is a good time to begin protection from the blister rust. Go out in the pine woods and in adjoining areas and pull up the offensive gooseberries and currants. Both of them are enemies of the white pine since they harbor the blister rust. Destruction of these bushes is the only practicable means of controlling this disease.
